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# ***LABOUR ORGANISER***

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# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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## Labour Will Win!

BY-ELECTIONS come and go. Rochdale, Kelvingrove and Torrington are to be succeeded by North Islington, Wigan, St. Helens and Ealing South. The *Labour Organiser* will be printing before the Torrington result is announced and so it cannot be commented upon in this issue, but all observers expect that the swing against the Government will be no less pronounced at Torrington than it was in all recent by-elections.

Kelvingrove was the fourth seat won by the Labour Party in less than eighteen months. This compares with one seat won by the Tories, from the I.L.P., in the whole period from 1945 to 1950.

### Good Result

Kelvingrove was an exceptionally good result for Labour. The constituency was a difficult one, being a mixture of slum, residential and business areas. The Tory candidate was the widow of the very popular late Member and was herself a leading political personality. The Labour candidate was a Catholic in a constituency where religious sectarianism still exists. She was the kind of Labour woman doing essential but unspectacular service on local council throughout the country.

Her campaign concentrated on the things she knew most about: rents, the cost of living, the plight of the aged, the threat of unemployment, and

similar issues which are of such concern to ordinary working-class folk. There was no deviation on the H-bomb, or any other subject. There cannot be any suggestion that the seat was won because of a split in the anti-Labour vote. The vote given to the Labour and I.L.P. candidates was bigger than the Tory and Independent Liberal vote together.

Kelvingrove gave no support to the thesis advanced after Rochdale which claimed that Labour was not doing as well as it should in the by-elections and that to win the General Election a bolder leadership and a new policy are required. The next series of by-elections is for what are regarded as safe seats, three Labour and one Tory. It is not unusual for interest to be low where no change of representation is likely. If this happens and there is a fall in the Labour vote, or in the majority in the three Labour seats, we shall witness again the wringing of hands by those with little faith in the Party's leadership and policy.

### Rosy Prospects

If the trend shown in by-election results has any relationship to the subsequent General Election, then Labour's prospects are rosy indeed. Not only have four seats been won, but also the Tory share of the vote has fallen in all by-elections since 1955 and the Labour share has increased in

most. Where Labour's share did not increase it was due to the total vote having to be shared between more anti-Government candidates than fought at the previous General Election.

If, against this trend, Labour does not win the General Election, the Party can only blame itself. It is as plain as a pikestaff that if the Party remains united, and if the efforts of its members are directed to propagating its accepted policy and improving its electoral organisation, victory is assured.

## Town Had Only 86 Voters

MR. GEORGE LAWSON, M.P., writing an article on Motherwell and Wishaw in the February issue of *Scotland*, delved into the historical background of how the two towns became a joint burgh in 1920, and brought to light one or two interesting facts which should be of interest to readers.

The historians of Motherwell, it appears, say that the name of that town was taken from a well of crystal-clear water called The Lady Well. The water is said to have bubbled out of the ground from time immemorial.

The thought, Mr. Lawson writes, evokes a scene of quiet charm. The thoughts of the coalmasters in the 1850s, however, held no such appreciation—they were limited to the extraction of coal, and this resulted in sending the waters of the well deep into the bowels of the earth.

### Water Shortage

The drying up of the well (and two others in the vicinity) left the people in such straits for water that they had to provide themselves with a public supply. In order to do this they were compelled to raise the town to the status of a burgh.

This was in 1865, when the town's population numbered 4,261. The franchise, however, was confined to those with a £10 property qualification and the

electors' roll as a result numbered 86.

It is interesting to note that of this number 29 voted on 24 candidates! As only nine places had to be filled, the modern football pool permutator will automatically think of the number of variations that could have appeared on the voting paper.

### Burgh Status

Mr. Lawson then turns his attention to Wishaw, who appear to have an advantage over Motherwell inasmuch that they obtained burgh status ten years earlier—that is, in 1855.

In this instance the first electoral roll is given as 80. These had the right to elect 12 members of the council. While the number of candidates contesting this election is not given, it is interesting to note that included in the electors' roll were the names of one distiller, one excise officer, two spirit merchants, four innkeepers, seven bakers, six grocers, four shoemakers, seven general merchants, one doctor, four surgeons, a minister, one gentleman and eleven coalmasters.

Mr. Lawson cryptically remarks that of simple coal miners none were listed although in 1855 there is information of some 1,200 being evicted in Wishaw from their company-owned houses!

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# ROTHERHAM HONOURS VETERANS

by J. T. Anson

NOT even its best friend would describe Rotherham as a beautiful town. Apart from that portion which is locally called 'up the hill', it is almost impossible to find a district of the town which is not within easy sight of the many steel furnaces or busy railway sidings and marshalling yards.

It suffers from all the effects of the industrial revolution, with old houses for the workers clustered round those giants, which day and night go into labour, belch forth smoke and unused gases, and illuminate the night sky with the glare from the tapping of furnaces and the tipping of molten slag, to give birth to steel in all its many forms.

It has seen all the hardships and triumphs of most industrial towns. It knows what unemployment means to its citizens, and it has shared the victories of the nation as a whole, secure in the knowledge that the product of its community has contributed at least its quota of the means of victory, whether it has been won on the battlefields, at sea, or in the struggle for human justice and freedom.

In the general economic progress of mankind, the product of Rotherham's people and industry must be manifest. The building of railways, bridges, factories, machines and pen-nibs requires the basic material of steel which Rotherham was producing before Sheffield was 'Sheffield Steel'.

## 195 Years

In the battle of ideas, Rotherham has been in the forefront, and it was to six of its sons and daughters who played a magnificent part in this battle that tribute was paid the other Friday evening. Men and women who over a combined period of 195 years have fought for the cause of freedom and social justice.

There was Alderman Edwin Cruickshanks, 35 years a member of the borough council, an ex-President of the local

Trades and Labour Council and the district committee of the A.S.W., a Justice of the Peace since 1919, an alderman since 1929, Mayor of the borough the same year, and Chairman of the council's Finance Committee for 29 years. He and his wife celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1957.

Alderman F. C. Wofinden, who was unable to be present at the celebration, can look back on 46 years on the old Greasborough U.D.C. and the Rotherham borough council. He was elected Chairman of the urban council in 1915 and re-elected in 1921, 1928 and 1929. He served as Mayor of the borough in 1946 and is the Chairman of the Fire and Watch Committee. Still Chairman of his ward committee — what an example to some councillors we know—he continues to be an active Party worker.

## Youth Work

Alderman G. A. Barker comes from that proud and sturdy stock of Yorkshire miners, without whom steel would still be iron ore. He is still actively interested in Youth work, and many of the playing fields of his town are memorials to this interest which found its outlet in his Chairmanship of the Parks Committee. Thirty-two years is the span of his service on the borough council, having been Mayor in 1939.

Next come the ladies, who are more rare in the realm of long-serving members of local authorities.

Alderman Mrs. F. L. Green, who celebrates 30 years' membership on her borough council. She was Rotherham's first woman to be elected Mayor in 1943, and became a Justice of the Peace in 1943 and an alderman in 1949. She has long been especially interested in the cultural developments and is Chairman of the Library Committee. Mrs. Green, like many of those who have pioneered ideas, held her own points of view strongly and these were expressed in her many activities outside the local authority, particularly in the pursuit of peace and the total abolition of war.

Alderman Mrs. M. H. Moorhouse has the distinction of being the third woman to be elected to the borough council. Her 42 years' active work in the Labour Party,

and her 29 years' membership of the council, have enabled her to realise her special interests in the care of the children, the poor and the aged. A former Chairman of the Board of Guardians, she is now the Chairman of the Welfare Committee, a Justice of the Peace and was Mayor of the borough in 1945.

### **Metal Mechanic**

Alderman L. Kirk is a product of one of the ancillary trades of a steel town. He is by trade a metal mechanic and was Chairman of his local branch for 14 years. For years he has been an active member of the Labour Party, being a founder member of his ward committee, and a delegate from his union to the Trades and Labour Council for more than 30 years. Elected to the borough council 23 years ago, he has made housing one of his

special interests, being Chairman of that difficult committee for five years.

My own thoughts on leaving the celebration were mixed. I felt extremely sorry that six worthy Socialists should be departing from the scene of so many personal and social triumphs. The memory of my father, who looked to his retirement as a means of doing those many personal things which his work-a-day activities had prevented, came back to me. I thought that these six colleagues may be making similar plans.

We wish them well in the future and hope that their example and sacrifice, which have contributed so much to the alleviation of their fellow citizens from the consequences of unplanned, industrial development, will provide an example to those who follow along the roads of social progress.

## **Erith has 92 Collectors**

IN the February issue of the *Labour Organiser* an article on collectors asked 'Do we deserve collectors?' The Erith and Crayford Constituency Labour Party certainly do. It does not take the services of its officers and membership subscription collectors for granted.

On the 31st January last, every constituency and ward officer and ninety-two of its collectors were invited to a social event in the Crayford Town Hall in appreciation of their services.

It was in this happy, carefree atmosphere that Mr. Arthur Skeffington, M.P., member of the National Executive Committee, Mr. Norman Dodds, the Member of Parliament for the constituency, and Miss Sara Barker, the Assistant National Agent, were able to say 'Thank you' in a big way.

There have been many complaints that constituency parties in Labour strongholds do not play their parts in building up individual membership. Erith and Crayford is a safe Labour seat and it sets the majority of constituencies in that category a shining example. It has 3,340 individual members and is aiming at 5,000 within the next year or so.

It has ninety-two voluntary collectors, and not a penny piece of commission is paid to a single collector. Nor is the voluntary system geared to a lottery.

Full marks should be given to this constituency because it has demonstrated that men and women will do a basic job for its own sake when the party plans its voluntary system sensibly and shows appreciation of what its key workers have done.

The Town Ward, which was awarded the first prize in the membership contest, won a beautiful mahogany shield which had been made and exquisitely carved by an enthusiastic member of the party. This ward has a membership of 526, out of a total electorate of 3,243. It has collected an average subscription of 5s. 6½d. per member for the year.

One of its collectors, Mr. Perry, who has been a keen worker for many years and a lifelong member of the National Union of Railwaymen, collects from 80 members, and last year obtained 6s. for every member on his book. Hats off to Mr. Perry.

The ward which was awarded second place in the contest has an electorate of 5,449. It has a membership of 433 and has collected an average of 5s. 3d. per member. The third prize was won by a ward in a middle class area. It has 389 members and has collected an average of 5s. 6½d. per member.

Three other wards had collected 5s. or more per member, and the lowest average subscription in any ward was 4s.



# 'READING' SYSTEM NOW REVISED

ELECTORAL organisation has a new place of honour in the Party since the Wilson Committee put our shortcomings into cold and shocking print. Partly for this reason, and partly because the next General Election can't now be far away, some constituency parties have worked out in detail—and sometimes published—their plans for winning it.

Stan Dunce's articles in the *Organiser* are an example, and I have seen several more in duplicated form.

Many of them are based on the 'Reading System'—an electioneering method built up over many years and fully described in Ian Mikardo's 'Electioneering in Labour Marginal Constituencies'. We have now re-written this in the form of a duplicated manual for use by the key personnel we depend on for operation of the system.

## Basic Assumptions

Since it was written, the methods argued out in Ian Mikardo's document—at that time quite controversial—have become so widely accepted that we had begun to be suspicious of them. We therefore took this opportunity to check them at every point. The result was a vindication of the basic assumptions and general methods we have been employing.

But we found compiling the manual a worth-while job. We were able to cut out some unnecessary complications in the system, to introduce a few innovations and to produce what we think will be a valuable guide at every stage in election work.

The coloured card system for identifying the electorate as 'for', 'against' or 'doubtful', of course remains. The index is still decentralised and we still have district managers to keep it up to date and keep the necessary canvassing going. In addition, we now have ward organisers to form a very valuable link between district managers and the agent.

**READING** has overhauled its famous election system, though basic changes have proved unnecessary. Harry Gibbs explains in this article the amendments that have been introduced. The revised system will be published in full in future issues.

One thing we have stopped doing is dividing 'buffs' (doubtfuls) into A's and B's, according to whether they are confirmed non-voters or not. 'Y' voters we don't now put all on Buff Cards, but on White or Blue (marked 'Y') according to whether they're Labour or Tory.

We have drastically simplified the procedure for lining up the index with the new register. On close examination it was found that central lining-up to effect exchanges of cards between districts didn't account for as many List 'B' electors as we expected, didn't greatly reduce the canvassing to be done on the new register and did cost an enormous amount of time. There was also, in this method, a great risk of confusion and delay if an election came between 28th November and 15th February.

## Annual Canvass

What we now do is an annual canvass (not a big one) of List 'B' electors and a simple line-up of the index when the new register is published.

The 'classification' system for dealing with removals has also been done away with and replaced by a much simpler method. Greater stress is now laid on tracing removals outside election periods and the same applies to getting Postal Votes.

The most notable innovations are those introduced, not so much to amend the system, as to provide aids to its complete

operation. Everybody with any experience knows it's much easier to produce plans for winning elections than to carry them out. This is particularly true of a thorough-going, permanent method like the coloured card-index system.

For instance, in the White, Blue and Buff Card system, what does a Buff card mean? Doubtful? Or does it often mean that we are the people who don't know, not the elector? We have introduced a fourth category represented by 'Green'. 'Green' means 'not identified'. A glance at a box will show how completely identification has been done in that district. Needless to say, the aim is 'No Greens'.

Permanent records have the effect of cutting down the amount of canvassing required, but this advantage is lost if canvassing isn't systematically and regularly seen to. It soon piles up and becomes a formidable task that nobody wants to tackle.

### Canvass Calendar

We listed the various canvassing jobs required to keep the index in tip-top shape and put them in the form of a

calendar, with canvassing of one type or another for each month of the year except August, September, November and December.

It includes, incidentally, a canvass of 'Y' voters which has been taken over lock, stock and barrel by a keen new Youth Section.

Of course, this manual was compiled for use in Reading, but only one sheet of it relates specifically to Reading only. The basic requirements of marginal electioneering don't vary from place to place and there is nothing in a system made for a single-borough constituency that can't be adapted for use in any other sort of constituency.

'Marginal Electioneering' incorporates illustrations. We can supply copies at 3s. It has been made up in loose-leaf form, because, although it's meant to be the 'bible' for practice in Reading, it is to be amended from time to time in the light of experience and new ideas. We have an Organisation Committee for this purpose and would greatly welcome comments on any phase of electioneering work.

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## Hemel Hempstead is Ready

WHEN I first went to Hemel Hempstead many years ago, I never thought it would be possible to say: this seat can be won by Labour.

But times have changed and, despite a Tory majority of 6,136 at the last General Election, we have a reasonable chance of winning the seat at the next General Election.

Of course, the biggest contributory factor towards victory will be the people's disgust at the Tory Government's abominable record. Another is the housing development which has taken place at Hemel Hempstead itself. Yet another is the fact that Lady Davidson is not fighting again. This is a small factor but the loss of her prestige is bound to be our gain.

On top of all this is the splendid voluntary work which has been done continually by the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate and our local comrades.

At Hemel Hempstead in the last borough council elections Labour won every seat. This in itself is a considerable

advantage in making preparations for the next General Election.

In the realm of membership, they have done a remarkably good job. In 1951 their membership was 1,569. In 1957 it was 2,984. This was an increase of 1,415, which is more than the total membership of some C.L.P.'s.

Moreover, it was only 16 less than the high target set them by the Regional Council two years ago. Income from contributions went up correspondingly, which says much for the collectors—£105 in 1951: £267 in 1957. Affiliated membership was also increased substantially.

### Regular Propaganda

Those who are always saying the day of the public meeting is done with would be pooh-poohed at Hemel Hempstead, because Harold Wilson and Bernard Floud (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate) recently addressed a meeting of 250 there. Propaganda has also been done by the distribution of leaflets in the villages and by the distribution every other month



of 10,000 copies of *Citizen*. All of which is bound to yield good results.

The candidate has paid regular visits and addressed all kinds of meetings. He has earned the respect and appreciation of the members.

Now the honorary secretary, John Fryd, is in the act of getting the Electoral Register marked as the basis on which to make an all-out drive when the General Election comes, and it is hoped that this will be ready by early autumn. John has done a fine job all the way through.

Of course, they realise that the marked register alone won't be sufficient. They know that in addition to possessing reliable information, effective polling day organisation is essential. To this task they are now applying themselves. They aim at establishing adequate election machinery in every polling district before the General Election comes along. Their motto is: GET READY NOW.

W. T. Young

## TIVERTON PLANS ITS ELECTION STRATEGY

**D**OWN in Devon there is a constituency named Tiverton, which spreads over many acres of this beautiful county. Its members have already shown considerable initiative and determination despite the political odds against them.

Some weeks ago a pre-General Election consultation took place at Exeter, and Tiverton was represented. A document on General Election preparations was before the meeting and each constituency was asked to consider this in detail at a meeting of its candidate, agent and constituency officers and then to present a plan for discussion at a meeting of the General Committee.

Tiverton lost no time in acting on this advice, for it has already produced an excellent document for discussion at a very early meeting of its General Committee.

The introductory letter points out that, while no one could say with any certainty the timing of the General Election, it is important that electoral machinery shall be thoroughly overhauled and ready to

rip into top gear from the word 'Go'.

The task before the constituency is not minimised. Indeed, it is emphasised. The letter draws attention to a detailed map of the constituency on the front cover of the document, which looks more like a map of a continent than a Parliamentary constituency.

The members are urged not to be desponded by the colossal task which confronts the party, but to assist the officers to work out a plan whereby maximum effort can be exerted.

### For Discussion

The document is not to be a 'Take it or leave it plan'. It is to be the basis for a discussion by the General Committee from which will emerge the framework of the final plan for the General Election.

What does the document contain? Reference to the new register, and suggestions for securing a marked up register in every village, arrangements for writing up envelopes already in stock, the collation of information, by each Local Labour Party for submission to the agent, regarding the number of dwelling houses in each locality, up-to-date information concerning names and addresses, and telephone numbers of hall caretakers, information about committee rooms, facilities for advertising in each locality, names and addresses of members and supporters willing to exhibit posters, and information about members willing to chair at meetings.

Last, but by no means least, all local Labour Parties are urged to collect information about potential postal voters.

A preliminary meeting plan is outlined and the document draws attention to the key personnel required for the sound conduct of the campaign.

Finance has not been left in the air. The document sets out estimated expenditure and income and leaves the Constituency and Local Labour Parties in no doubt as to their responsibility.

By the time this article appears in the *Labour Organiser*, the Tiverton Constituency Labour Party will probably have discussed its plans for the General Election. Many new ideas may have been contributed. The important point is that the readiness of the officers will not only have the General Committee General Election minded, but will have awakened a sense of deep responsibility in the minds of the members of every affiliated body.

# LOCAL ELECTIONS MU

**T**HERE are sufficient Labour votes in most areas to win additional seats on the local councils, and in some cases sufficient to bring the councils under Labour control. It is true that these votes have been cast for the Labour Party in Parliamentary elections and that they have never been mobilised in local government elections.

The average poll at the last General Election was just over 76 per cent, but the poll for all types of local authorities on the average is considerably less than 50 per cent. And, of course, there are many uncontested returns to local councils, especially in rural areas.

## ***Small Increase***

In the coming local elections the main job facing the Party is to persuade more Labour supporters to vote than in previous local elections. Even if a substantial increase in the Labour poll throughout the country cannot be achieved, in every local authority area there are marginal seats that can be won by a relatively small increase of the Labour vote.

The achievement of the necessary increase in these places is mainly a matter of organisation. Many factors influence election results, including the political atmosphere, the issues involved and the character and ability of the candidates, and the importance of organisation can be over-estimated. But organisation does count for something, and this something is enough in most marginal seats to make the difference between victory and defeat.

A well-organised campaign is conducted according to a plan which exploits the local political situation to the full, and which utilises the available resources of money and manpower to the best advantage.

Far too often in fighting elections Labour workers do all the things that

have become traditional without considering if their efforts are making any real contribution to the result. Being aware of the aim to be achieved, and so consciously working to achieve it, makes an enormous difference in the quality of the election workers' effort.

The plan of campaign should be a realistic one, which means that it should be related to the known possibilities of the particular electoral area. For instance, in one ward another 300 votes may guarantee victory, whereas in another it may need 3,000 more votes to make certain of winning the seat. It might be realistic to plan the campaign in the first ward with the object of securing 300 extra votes, but probably it would be quite impracticable to plan a campaign in the second which had 3,000 additional votes as its goal.

This does not mean that the second ward should not be fought. Very often by fighting a ward that is hopeless it is possible to compel the opposition to use resources which otherwise they would transfer to marginal wards. It does mean, however, that whether or not wards should be fought, and the kind of fight which should be waged in them, should be considered carefully as part of a co-ordinated plan for the whole local authority area.

## ***Goal Set***

It is not unusual for wards to be, or not to be, contested for no other reason than that of custom, and for those engaged in each contest to put everything they have into it, irrespective of the possible result. Resources for fighting local elections usually are limited and, therefore, it is all the more important that they should be used to produce the best result in relation to the goal that has been set.

If it has been decided to have a shadow fight in a ward, no more



# BE PLANNED TO WIN

money or time should be spent on it than is needed to occupy the opposition, and any saving should be diverted to marginal wards where extra votes may mean holding or winning seats. Similarly, even in a marginal ward it may be found unnecessary to attempt to cover the whole ward by literature, canvassing and meetings. In such a case there can be a concentration on the more favourable areas from which the bulk of the Labour votes will come.

## **Rare Bird**

Wise decisions about such matters can be made only if the past electoral history of the area is known. Unfortunately, the 'Marked Register' is a rare bird and even Local Committee Room records are often quite inadequate. Nevertheless, it is possible to obtain information from the published results of previous elections and, unless there have been big recent changes in population, they can be a pretty useful guide in planning the campaign.

In a ward that it is thought can be won it will be necessary to fix the number of votes required to win it and to relate that to the number of promises needed to reach the target. There is a gap between promises and votes even in Parliamentary elections and it is much wider in local government elections. Even so, it is possible to fix a target of promises which, if achieved, will ensure the required vote.

When both the target of votes and promises have been set for the ward it should be possible to break down the target to polling district or even street level. A small group of workers, given a reasonable target of promises, are likely to reach it, but if they were expected to canvass the whole of their polling district they may well regard the task as hopeless. Working to a target is a great stimulus to extra effort, especially as the accumulated figures

get nearer to the target that has been set.

It is still necessary to insist that the purpose of the canvass in an election is to find out where support lies. Few people are converted when the fight is on and to spend time on attempted conversion is to neglect supporters who may require only a little persuasion to come out and vote. Also, blind canvassing is not very productive because not only does it stimulate opponents but also it discourages canvassers. Canvassing is one of the most important of election jobs and it would be done much more efficiently if some training were given.

A good canvasser is soon able to distinguish those who are reliable promises and once the required number of promises are obtained it is the job of the polling day organisation to see that those promises are converted into votes. Apathy is the main enemy, and if a strenuous effort is made on polling day to get known supporters to the polling station and all others are ignored a substantial proportion will register their votes.

## **Financial Considerations**

Financial considerations are an important factor in planning the campaign. The law sets a limit for each candidate of £25 and 2d. per elector after the first 500 electors, but the party's financial position does not always permit an expenditure up to anything like the legal maximum.

Shortage of money may make it necessary to cut out meetings for the purpose of issuing a late leaflet. Also, it may be necessary to arrange for the election address not to go to every house in the area, so as to enable Labour supporters to have delivered to them a poll card two or three days before polling day, as well as an address delivered earlier.

Planning is essential to a successful campaign, and before the campaign starts, it is advisable to have a small committee whose job it is to draw up the plan, after a careful review of the possibilities and resources.

**A. L. Williams**

# Find Work for Willing Hands to do

**D**URING just over fifty years in the Labour movement I have witnessed organising experiments that might be helpful even in the days of television and less obvious poverty.

My early experiences showed me that organisations are built most easily by showing people that the efforts made are effective and worthwhile. All of us enjoy feeling the thrill of accomplishment.

The purpose of an organiser is to furnish worthwhile jobs that are within the capacity of every willing member: the nearer to the upper limits of the member's capacity the more satisfying it is to a willing member. To go beyond capacity is, however, an easy way to lose the member.

## North Islington

The best organisation I have ever been in was North Islington about thirty years ago.

We had no full-time organiser but we had a membership of about 1,000. We had canvass records, which covered many elections. We had one or two exceptionally capable folk who each week took about a dozen cards of people who had voted for us several times and tried to make them members: the result was wonderful.

Where things are done voluntarily it is essential that the method checks itself. For instance, for sending notices to members there would be a runner who distributed to area distributors. There would also be an assistant distributor who would contact the distributor, especially if he did not get his own notice and who would arrange to assist with or do the whole distribution.

The rooms were open every evening and jobs such as writing up envelopes, alterations to canvass cards, and as many other purposeful jobs as could be found were always available for any member who came along.

## Display Bills

Obtaining the names of those willing to display window bills is important. There are those who will display notices of lectures, classes, socials or the like. A note of the value of the display offered enables the use of the best when only a few window bills are deemed necessary. To list those willing to display window

bills at election times makes it possible to get the bills out at the earliest time possible. This tends to discourage floating voters from being talked into displaying Tory bills.

I would, finally, like to put a word in for the 'snowball' canvass. It is surprising how quickly a small out-of-the-way village can be sized up if you can get one or two contacts, and a single worker can do this quite well. In a village, people generally know each other pretty well. Each contact puts you in contact with a few others who you visit in order to gain further contacts.

If you have a register you can often find one or two who will go over it and tell you known Tories, trade unionists, and all who are interested one way or the other. In an unknown village the political atmosphere can be fairly estimated in no time: often an organisation can be started this way.

**A. INSTONE**

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## Situations Vacant

**SEVENOAKS C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Five-roomed flat available. Application forms can be obtained from the **Secretary, 59 Dartford Road, Sevenoaks, Kent**, to whom they should be returned not later than 15th April, 1958.

**HITCHIN C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Transport available. Housing accommodation highly probable. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they should be returned not later than 3rd May, 1958.

**BRIERLEY HILL C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they should be returned not later than 9th May, 1958.

**NORTH NORFOLK C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Organiser. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they should be returned not later than 26th April, 1958.



# LABOUR TACKLES PARLIAMENT

by S. E. Barker

THE Wellington Hall, Belfast, was the scene of the 1907 Labour Party Conference, over which Walter Hudson, the Labour Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, and member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, presided.

The striking success of Labour candidates at the 1906 General Election was still enthusing the movement. For the first time a Parliamentary report was embodied in the Annual Report and was signed by the Parliamentary Committee's chairman, James Keir Hardie, M.P.

Keir Hardie pointed out in the report that of the 30 members of the Parliamentary Party, 26 were without experience of Parliamentary procedure. Despite this handicap the party had comported itself with remarkable ability.

The Parliamentary Party adopted the principle of selecting one speaker to speak on its behalf in all important debates. Hardie contended that if the arrangement was generally followed that the House of Commons would be relieved of weary reiteration.

## Trade Disputes

D. J. Shackleton, the Labour Member for Clitheroe, had been in charge of the Trades Disputes Bill. He handled his task magnificently and so great was the appreciation that the Parliamentary Party, supported by the General Federation of Trade Unions, gave him a dinner in the House of Commons on the evening the Bill finally passed through the House of Lords.

Hardie pointed out that, while the Parliamentary Committee had ensured that social and labour questions were brought to the fore, the Labour Members had been alive to the fact that no political party could keep its foothold in politics unless it took a keen interest in the wider interests of national life.

Therefore, foreign affairs, militarism, finance, education had all been given close attention, and the Labour Party's vote in the House of Commons had always been cast on the side of progress.

During the year affiliated membership had approached the million mark. Total membership had reached 998,338 and the number of trade unions affiliated had increased from 158 to 176. Fourteen local Labour Associations had taken advantage of their right to affiliate.

## Co-op Affiliation

The Tunbridge Wells Co-operative Society had also affiliated during the year. This was the second co-operative organisation to associate itself with the Labour Party. The total affiliated membership of the Tunbridge Wells Society and the Workington Society was 2,271.

There were two by-elections during the year. Robert Smillie fought Cocker-mouth, polled 1,436 votes, in a three-cornered fight; and was the bottom of the poll. T. Russell Williams contested Huddersfield, polling 6,302 in a three-cornered fight; he came within 489 of the Liberal who topped the poll.

The report contained a very interesting paragraph headed 'Internationalism'. An important conference of the Socialist and Labour Parties in the Parliaments of Europe was held in Essex Hall, London, commencing July 17th. In addition to British Labour M.P.s, delegates attended from Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Austria and Russia. M. Anikine, the delegate from the Russian Duma, was said to have given a very interesting account of his 'unhappy country'.

The report recommended the appointment of a 'Party Election and Registration Agent'. It was considered that the duties of such an officer should be to visit the local Labour

Associations in the country, to advise on all matters of registration, to ascertain the requirements of the constituencies in regard to literature and other forms of assistance and to make suggestions for maintaining organisation in the country in a state of efficiency and to keep them in touch with Labour headquarters. The Conference referred back this recommendation for further consideration!

### Labour Women

A very interesting debate took place on the paragraph in the report relating to the formation of the Labour Women's League. Mabel Hope, of the Postal Telegraph Clerks, pointed out that the Party was in need of the help of a sound women's organisation. She was enthusiastically supported by Mr. A. Gould, of the General Union of Carpenters and Joiners, who said that provision should be made for the Women's League to affiliate to the Labour Party.

It was Arthur Henderson who suggested that Mr. Gould should persuade his Union to send in an amendment to the Party constitution the following year, which would make possible the affiliation of this organisation of enthusiastic women.

## Lancashire Youth is not so simple

WHAT are young people thinking about politics? The Bury and Radcliffe Constituency Labour Party wanted to find out, and in January its prospective Parliamentary candidate, Mr. R. P. Walsh, interviewed 182 youngsters, between the ages of 18 and 20, in the centres of the two towns.

His selection of those to be interviewed was made completely at random and to avoid group influence only the views of the first person to answer in any group were recorded.

In answer to the question 'Are you interested in politics?' 50 per cent answered 'Yes' and 50 per cent answered 'No', though in the 'Yes' group were 36 who qualified their answer by saying 'to some extent'. Sixty-nine per cent expressed the view that public opinion counts in politics, 11 per cent thought it did not, and 20 per cent did not know if it did or did not.

Only 33 per cent were able to say who was the Member of Parliament for Bury and Radcliffe. One young woman thought it was Mr. Macmillan! Thirty-four per cent stated that they knew that the Labour Party had selected a prospective candidate and of these half knew his name. Nearly all knew who the Prime Minister was, though four thought it was Mr. Butler.

### Knew Chancellor

Rather surprisingly, 70 per cent knew the name of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and 50 per cent knew that he had succeeded Mr. Thorneycroft. Of these latter, 18 thought that he had been right to resign, 19 thought he had not, and the rest did not express any opinion.

When asked which was the most pressing problem facing the country, only five gave a direct reply. On subjects being mentioned, 40 per cent then said the cost of living, 40 per cent the avoiding of war, and 14 per cent inflation. The remainder did not know.

It is a good idea for a political party to find out what people are thinking before deciding the character of its propaganda efforts, but it is difficult to imagine what the Bury and Radcliffe Constituency Labour Party will make out of the information Mr. Walsh collected. Certainly the young people of Bury and Radcliffe appear to be better informed about political affairs than many people think, and this is probably true of the country as a whole.

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**The place County Councils are to occupy in the proposed new Local Government structure is described here by Len Sims.**

# Counties in the New Set-up

HAVING dealt with the power and functions given to the Local Government Commission for England, and the immensity of their task, we can now consider the powers to be given to county councils.

As mentioned previously, the county councils will themselves have to await the decision of the Commission as to when it is practicable for the county councils to undertake their review, and to implement the powers conferred upon them. Just as the powers of the Local Government Commission are wide and can have considerable effect upon the status of local government, so too can be the recommendations of county councils.

It will be the duty of county councils to review the circumstances of the county districts within their area and then make proposals for effecting such changes as will result in 'effective and convenient local government'.

The changes that can be put forward in the county councils' proposals are those produced by any of the following means or combinations of means:

1. The alteration of the area of a county district.
2. The constitution of a new non-county borough by amalgamation of non-county boroughs with one or more county district.
3. The constitution of a new urban or rural district by the amalgamation of areas.
4. The abolition of an urban or rural district.
5. The conversion of a rural district into an urban district or vice versa.
6. The inclusion of a non-county borough in a rural district.
7. The alteration of the area of a borough included in a rural district or a parish.
8. The constitution of a new parish by amalgamation of parishes or by the amalgamation of parts of areas.
9. The abolition of a parish.

10. The grouping of two or more parishes.

In carrying out their review, a county council can decide whether to cover the whole of its area or only a part. It must, however, consult with the appropriate councils that will be concerned. The Bill goes further than *consult*—it is necessary to *confer* with *representatives* of the councils.

The Minister may direct the county council, in carrying out its review, to include in its report observations on matters that he may consider desirable. He may also give a date by which the report and proposals are to be submitted.

## Report Proposals

On the completion of the review the county council must submit a report to the Minister, together with proposals as to the changes it desires. Copies of these proposals must also be sent to the local councils concerned, and be published in one or more local newspapers circulating in the areas. The notice must state the proposals that are being made, and where a copy is available for inspection. Representations can be made to the Minister within two months of the publication of the notice.

Representations can be made by the council of the local authority concerned; as a result of a parish meeting; or by a meeting of electors who are affected by the proposals. Where representations have been lodged, the Minister should make arrangements to have local inquiries held into the objections.

The Minister, after the period of representations has lapsed, must then consider the proposals and any representations that may have been made. An order can then be made giving effect to the proposals with, or without, modifications.

If it appears to the Minister, after consulting with the local authorities concerned, that there appears to be a *prima facie* case for making a change that comes

within the powers of the county council, and the county council has failed to do so, the Minister can take action.

This is to be done by the Minister publishing in local newspapers that he is considering making the change and that a copy of his proposals are open to inspection at a specified place. The same provisions regarding representations apply.

### **Hold Review**

A clause in the Bill also provides for the Minister, in certain circumstances, to direct the Commission to hold a review. In such a case the county council would then be consulted and it, too, would be included in the local authorities to whom copies of the proposals are to be sent and who can make representations.

Once a review has been held and an order made, no further review can take place for at least ten years.

One of the problems confronting local government has been, and will continue to be the question of county boroughs. It is natural for large non-county boroughs to wish to achieve county borough status, and for county councils to object. To a great degree this arises from the amount of revenue that is involved.

In view of these factors, and that local government reform has been anticipated for quite a long time, it has been the policy of the Government over the past few years to refuse applications for the creation of county boroughs.

The new Bill, which gives the Commissions power to create county boroughs, also lays down that in considering such proposals it is necessary to presume that it will need a population of 100,000 to sustain a county borough.

The Bill also lays down that no local authority shall have the power to promote a Bill for forming a new area, or for altering the status of any local government authority, before the expiration of 15 years after the date on which this Bill becomes law.

*(To be concluded)*

## **ANOTHER RISE FOR AGENTS**

**A** AGENTS are to have another salary increase. This follows negotiations at the Adjustments Board between representatives of the Agents' Union, and

members of the National Executive Committee, representing local Labour Parties employing full-time agents.

Last July a cost of living increase of £25 was granted, but the present increase, which is to be paid on 1st April, involves changes in the salary scales, and represents an increase of as much as £75 a year for agents in their fourth year of service and only £25 for agents with six or more years of service.

This is because previously an agent had to serve six years before reaching the maximum salary for his grade. Now, agents will reach their maximum salaries after four years' service.

The rate for Grade I, to which all constituency agents belong, will be £560 per annum rising by four annual increments of £35 to £700. The rate for Grade II, to which belong a small number of agents usually responsible for more than one constituency, will be £620 per annum rising by four annual increments of £35 to £760.

In addition, there are two service awards for which all agents can qualify. An agent having reached the maximum of his grade and serving four years in the same post, is entitled to an additional £25 a year, and if he continues in the same post for a further four years he qualifies for another £25.

This means that a Grade I agent, having reached his maximum scale and serving continuously in the same constituency for eight years afterwards, is entitled to a maximum salary of £750.

These are maximum scales which all local Labour Parties employing full-time agents are compelled to pay, and some parties pay in excess of the scales.

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## **Woman Organiser**

Applications are invited for the appointment of a Woman Organiser for the South-West Region. The Woman Organiser is responsible for the organisation of women in the Region and the supervision of the political and educational work of Women's Sections in the constituencies and of Women's Advisory Councils. Forms of application and particulars can be obtained from the Chief Woman Officer, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 21st April, 1958.



# Bristol N.W. Increases Membership

'The total number of members in 1957 was 1,373 compared with 1,047 at the end of 1956—an increase of 326. This increase in membership is largely due to the activities in two wards—Avon and Southmead . . .

'An increased membership is particularly gratifying because it results in an additional income for the wards, the division and the national Party.'

*Annual Report of the Bristol N.W. Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'The Party rightly sacrifices some of its best members to the claims of efficient local government, but the sacrifice is sometimes too great for the strength of the small ward units which exist today. One solution which, for other reasons, is also desirable, is the encouragement of members of the local council to continue to work in the party and in the wards. This policy has certainly borne fruit during the year under review but imposes a great strain on a few willing members . . .

'The year opened with a membership of 2,039 and with the determination to embark on a campaign in the Spring with a target of 3,000 members. This campaign was duly launched and carried out effectively by most wards, with the result that 890 members were enrolled during the year. Taking into account the resignations and losses, the figure at the end of the year was 2,668.'

*Annual Report of the Dulwich Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'If we regard our party organisation as a means to winning General Elections—it can be said that we now possess much better organised and efficient machinery than a year ago. There has also been an encouraging increase in the number of active workers . . .

'Many people in our party have got into the habit of thinking that the Labour Party exists for the purpose of holding meetings, whereas the truth is that meetings are only held to serve the purposes of the Labour Party. It has been noticeable in this constituency over the last twelve months that many of the new

active workers who have been recruited will do a small job of work quite willingly, but will not come to a meeting under any circumstances—and will tell you so quite frankly. And that does not usually mean that they won't come to our meetings because they are not interesting enough—it means that they won't come to *any* kind of meeting. What is the answer? Well, it does seem that if we can't get people to come to us we will have to go to them—even if that means completely changing our party's organisation from top to bottom.'

*Annual Report of the Eastleigh Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'During June a Women's Week was organised and members of the Women's sections turned out during that period on the doorstep, and in Chatham gave every assistance in the St. John's ward by-election . . .

'The Propaganda Committee's main effort was the Propaganda Week held in September, when the Member of Parliament took an active part on the doorstep, visiting Old People's clubs, homes, hospitals and schools; approximately 200 new members were enrolled in the party.'

*Annual Report of Rochester and Chatham Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'The past year has been one of slight but steady progress in the constituency party organisation, More party meetings, political discussion, and an increase in individual membership, following a continued fall since 1952. The increase both in membership and activity, though heartening, is still far from satisfactory if we are to have the electoral machine needed to obtain a maximum Labour vote at the elections both nationally and locally.'

*Annual Report of Bromsgrove Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'We have displayed 16 sheet posters on nine sites throughout this year and at the beginning of 1958 have taken another one, making 10 permanent sites. There have been changes of posters every six

weeks and the campaign has begun to strike home at the Tories, as shown by their Annual Conference resolution, and letters and articles in the Press. The local Tories' resolution asked their Central Office to undertake a poster campaign to counteract Socialist mis-representation. We feel this reflects the success of our campaign and the anxiety of the Tories.'

*Annual Report of the Gillingham Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

'An innovation during the year was the use of a tape recording to carry the national policy to our members at ward level. The recording, which was an outline of the policy statement, "National Superannuation", by members of the National Executive Committee, was much appreciated, and provoked useful discussion of the scheme in several wards...

'For the first time since 1952, there is an increase in the amount of subscriptions received during the year over that of the previous year. Although the increase is small it is very encouraging.'

*Annual Report of the Richmond and Barnes Constituency Labour Party.*

## OVER 600 AT CONSTITUENCY ANNUAL RALLY

IT was a grand night for singing and the moon was rising high when members of the Sudbury and Woodbridge Constituency Labour Party and their children travelled to Ipswich for their first annual rally in the Co-op Hall there.

What a night! What a crowd! Over 600 members assembled in the main hall. Refreshments were served in the small hall. And some 200 children were fed and entertained to their hearts' delight in the café.

This achievement was all the greater because of the long distances most of them had to travel. This constituency comprises 209,214 acres and it stretches 40 miles from east to west and 20 miles from north to south. But they came—some by car, some by train, but most by coach. Their arrival looked like a little

invasion of Ipswich by Labour folk that night!

A splendid feature of this rally was the fact that as the name of each Local Labour Party was called by the Chairman all the members of it rose to their feet and received greetings from the others. By the time this act of fellowship was through all the members were in a state of warm enthusiasm and their faces were aglow with pleasure and excitement.

Then came the Skiffle group. I had been sceptical about Skifflers, but not after tonight! Not this group, anyhow. They played delightful melodies and the audience joined merrily in the choruses. At their best, Skifflers are said to be heirs to the Wandering Minstrels of bygone times. Indeed, this group lived up to this reputation on this memorable night.

### Melody Rangers

In addition, there were the Melody Rangers; the ventriloquist; the conjurer; and the happy band who led the community singing. There was no lack of healthy and stimulating entertainment for all to enjoy until past 11 o'clock of the night.

But this wasn't all. These members had not travelled all this way just to be entertained. They know that the times are seriously out of joint and that Labour will soon be called upon to put them right. So they came to hear the speakers as well as to be entertained.

Thus, they heard Reg Sorensen, Member of Parliament for Leyton, who spoke fine—as he had to do to hold this audience for half an hour—and revealed himself the same earnest and dedicated propagandist that he has always been.

They also heard a stirring message from their prospective Parliamentary candidate, Robert Stirling, who is determined to oust the Tory Minister of Agriculture next time.

I relate this story because it seems to me that Sudbury and Woodbridge Constituency Labour Party has solved the problem of how to get its members together in large numbers on at least one night of the year, not only to be entertained and to enjoy each other's fellowship, but to listen to political speeches as well; and also because it was one of the best C.L.P. rallies I have ever attended.

Sudbury and Woodbridge have 3,011 individual members. To get over 600 of them and their children together on one night was indeed a great achievement.



# NEW CANDIDATES AND AGENTS

## Agents

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee.

**MR. F. DOBSON** to **Oldham**. The appointment of an assistant Organiser at Oldham brings Frank Dobson, of Accrington, into the agency service. He is 31 years of age and recently completed the Agents' Training Course.

**MR. B. F. FOUNTAIN** to **Central Norfolk and Yarmouth**. Bernard Fountain, aged 31, a travelling salesman from Hellesden, Norfolk, fills the newly created post of assistant organiser, to the Central Norfolk and Yarmouth Constituencies. A rural district councillor, he has been a member of the Party for 13 years.

**MR. F. T. INGRAM** to **Walsall South**. Having completed the Agents' Training Course, Frank Ingram fills the vacancy at Walsall South. A builder's labourer from Lancing, in Sussex, he is 36 years of age.

**MR. V. J. LANCHESTER** to **South Norfolk**. The appointment of an additional organiser by the South Norfolk Party brings Victor Lanchester into the agency service at an early age. He is 20 and has recently completed his National Service with the R.A.F.

**MR. H. J. LUXTON** to **Gateshead**. Harry Luxton, 39 years of age, (a former London busman), has been a full-time agent at Hitchin for the past 5 years. He will be in charge of both the East and the West Gateshead constituencies.

**MR. T. A. J. MALONE** to **Woolwich** as assistant organiser. A life assurance clerk, Terry Malone is 24 years of age and has been an active member of the Woolwich Labour Party for the past 5 years.

**MR. T. R. McMAHON** to **Willesden West**. Terry McMahon has been a full-time agent for 9 years, serving at Kingston, Wellingborough, and, for the past 6½ years, at Edmonton. He is 33 years of age.

**MR. E. S. NATTRASS** to **Abingdon**. Aged 37, Stan Nattrass has been a full-time agent for 9 years. He took up his first appointment at Arundel and Shoreham in September 1949, moving to Dorking in July 1950.

**MR. E. C. PAIN** to **Luton**. Active in Ipswich for many years and full-time agent at Sevenoaks for the past 12 months, Edgar Pain has been appointed to the new agency post at Luton. He is 37 years of age.

**MR. W. W. STEPHENSON** to **Lewisham North**. Bill Stephenson, aged 32, a former student at Ruskin College, has been a member of the Party for 14 years, and now takes on the responsibility of a marginal constituency won from the Tories in a by-election.

**MR. S. G. TAYLOR** to **Gosport & Fareham**. Aged 28, Stanley Taylor, a wood machinist, has recently completed the Agents' Training Course. An ex-member of the League of Youth, he has been Election Agent in local elections in High Wycombe.

## Candidates

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary candidates by the National Executive Committee recently:

<b>St. Ives</b> ...	<b>Mr. D. Longden</b>
<b>Bristol West</b> ...	<b>Mr. M. Cocks</b>
<b>Gosport &amp; Fareham</b>	<b>Mr. A. S. Pratley</b>
<b>Manchester, Withington</b>	<b>Mr. R. E. Sheldon</b>
<b>St. Marylebone</b>	<b>Mr. Ben Hooberman</b>
<b>Brentford &amp; Chiswick</b>	<b>Dr. H. B. O. Cardew</b>
<b>Newcastle-upon-Tyne North</b>	<b>Dr. M. Lloyd Prichard</b>
<b>Skipton</b> ...	<b>Mr. F. O. Hooley</b>
<b>Cardiganshire</b> ...	<b>Mrs. Loti Hughes</b>
<b>Inverness</b> ...	<b>Mr. J. F. Coulter</b>



### CO-OPERATIVE CANDIDATE RUNNING IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

**Willesden West** - **Mr. L. A. Pavitt**



### WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

**Stockport South** **Mr. E. Roberts**  
**Burton** ... **Mr. F. T. McDonald**

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